

Docket AUS920010254US1

Appl. No.: 09/935,413
Filing Date: 08/23/2001**IN THE CLAIMS**

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (previously presented) A method for evaluating suppliers, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving sets of survey inputs from evaluators by a first computer system, the evaluators being associated with an organization seeking suppliers, the evaluator survey input sets being received as evaluator response documents, the evaluator response documents being XML formatted documents having evaluator requirements or preferences defined as XML formatted data elements, wherein the evaluator requirement or preference data elements provide quantitative values and the evaluator inputs define evaluator requirement or preferences as quantitative values for the respective data elements, such a evaluator requirement quantitative value indicating a required or preferred amount for the corresponding data element;

sending survey questions as a question sets in a supplier survey document for receipt by a second computer system for a supplier organization and for displaying by a browser of the second computer system, including wherein the supplier survey document is formatted as an XML document including information about answers for user input selection, the answer information including types of answers expected from the supplier organization and whether respective ones of the answers are dependent on respective other ones of the answers; for receipt by supplier computer systems and for displaying by browsers of the supplier computer systems;

sending an HTML formatted document including programming instructions, the instructions being for receipt and execution as an applets by the browsers of the second supplier computer systems, wherein the survey questions are rendered in the browser by the browser executing the applet, such that for the rendering of the survey questions the applet parses the questions and the answers into data arrays stored in memory of the second computer system, and wherein the browser executing the applet causes the instructions being for causing the supplier second computer systems to return supplier survey answers to the first

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computer system a server as an XML formatted answer response document responsive to the applets processing user inputs and the survey questions, wherein the answers are defined in a certain format as XML formatted data elements included in the responding answer response documents, the answer data elements having strings of text surrounded by text markups, the text markups including tags describing the data elements;

parsing the answer data elements from the answer response responding documents by the first computer system;

receiving, by the first computer system, rules input by the evaluator organization, wherein the rules define how supplier answers are combined with evaluator preferences or requirements and include weights for respective answers; and

evaluating the data elements by an evaluator process of the first computer system, wherein the evaluating comprises:

comparing the data elements to corresponding ones of the evaluator requirements, wherein the comparing produces quantitative correlations between respective answer data elements and respective evaluator requirements or preference; and

combining the correlations responsive to the weights and the received rules, wherein one of the correlations is defined as (10 - (absolute value (one of the answer data elements - the answer data element's respective evaluator requirement or preference data element))) / 10.

2. (canceled)

3. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the questions and their corresponding answers are organized in categories according to subject matter.

4. (original) The method of claim 3, wherein the categories include development process, quality, enterprise, platform, operating system and environment.

5. (canceled)

6. (canceled)

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7. (currently amended) The method of claim 16, wherein the method comprises the steps of:

~~sending survey questions for receipt by the evaluator's computer system;~~
~~sending programming instructions for receipt and execution by the computer systems of the evaluators evaluator's computer system, the instructions being for causing the evaluator's computer systems to return the evaluator survey inputs to the server, wherein the evaluator survey inputs are included in one or more evaluator responding documents and are defined in a certain format as data elements included in the one or more evaluator responding documents.~~

8. (currently amended) A computer program product stored on a tangible, computer readable medium, for evaluating supplier surveys, said computer program product having instructions for execution by a computer, which, when executed by the computer, cause the computer to implement a method, the method instructions comprising the steps of:

receiving sets of survey inputs from evaluators by a first computer system, the evaluators being associated with an organization seeking suppliers, the evaluator survey input sets being received as evaluator response documents, the evaluator response documents being XML formatted documents having evaluator requirements or preferences defined as XML formatted data elements, wherein the evaluator requirement or preference data elements provide quantitative values and the evaluator inputs define evaluator requirement or preferences as quantitative values for the respective data elements, such a evaluator requirement quantitative value indicating a required or preferred amount for the corresponding data element;

first instructions for sending survey questions as a question sets in a supplier survey document for receipt by a second computer system for a supplier organization and for displaying by a browser of the second computer system, including wherein the supplier survey document is formatted as an XML document including information about answers for user input selection, the answer information including types of answers expected from the supplier organization and whether respective ones of the answers are dependent on respective other

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ones of the answers; for receipt by supplier computer systems and for displaying by browsers of the supplier computer systems;

sending an HTML formatted document including programming instructions, the instructions being second instructions for receipt and execution as an applets by the browsers of the second supplier computer systems, wherein the survey questions are rendered in the browser by the browser executing the applet, such that for the rendering of the survey questions the applet parses the questions and the answers into data arrays stored in memory of the second computer system, and wherein the browser executing the applet causes the execution of the second instructions causing the second supplier computer systems to return supplier survey answers to the first computer system a server as an XML formatted answer response document responsive to the applets processing user inputs and the survey questions, wherein the answers are defined in a certain format as XML formatted data elements included in the answer response responding documents;

third instructions for parsing the answer data elements from the answer response responding documents by the first computer system;

receiving, by the first computer system, rules input by the evaluator organization, wherein the rules define how supplier answers are combined with evaluator preferences or requirements and include weights for respective answers; and

fourth instructions for evaluating the data elements by an evaluator process of the first computer system, wherein the evaluating comprises:

comparing the data elements to corresponding ones of the evaluator requirements, wherein the comparing produces quantitative correlations between respective answer data elements and respective evaluator requirements or preference; and

combining the correlations responsive to the weights and the received rules, wherein one of the correlations is defined as (10 - (absolute value (one of the answer data elements - the answer data element's respective evaluator requirement or preference data element)) / 10.

9. (canceled)

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10. (original) The computer program product of claim 8, wherein the questions and their corresponding answers are organized in categories according to subject matter.

11. (original) The computer program product of claim 10, wherein the categories include development process, quality, enterprise, platform, operating system and environment.

12. (canceled)

13. (canceled)

14. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 8+3, comprising: ~~instructions for sending survey questions for receipt by the evaluator's computer system;~~

~~sending evaluator survey sending instructions for receipt and execution by the evaluator's computer systems of the evaluators, wherein execution of the evaluator survey sending instructions by the evaluator's computer systems causes the evaluator's computer systems to return evaluator survey inputs to the server, wherein the evaluator survey inputs are included in one or more evaluator responding documents and are defined in a certain format as data elements included in the one or more evaluator responding documents.~~

15. (currently amended) A system for evaluating supplier surveys, the system comprising:

a processor for connecting to a network; and
a storage device coupled to the processor, wherein the storage device has stored thereon a computer program for evaluating supplier surveys, said computer program having instructions for execution by the processor, which, when executed by the processor, cause the system to implement a method, the method comprising the steps of:

— survey questions;

— receiving sets of survey inputs from evaluators by a first computer system, the evaluators being associated with an organization seeking suppliers, the evaluator

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survey input sets being received as evaluator response documents, the evaluator response documents being XML formatted documents having evaluator requirements or preferences defined as XML formatted data elements, wherein the evaluator requirement or preference data elements provide quantitative values and the evaluator inputs define evaluator requirement or preferences as quantitative values for the respective data elements, such a evaluator requirement quantitative value indicating a required or preferred amount for the corresponding data element;

first instructions operable with the processor for sending the survey questions as a question sets in a supplier survey document for receipt by a second computer system for a supplier organization and for displaying by a browser of the second computer system, including wherein the supplier survey document is formatted as an XML document including information about answers for user input selection, the answer information including types of answers expected from the supplier organization and whether respective ones of the answers are dependent on respective other ones of the answers to supplier computer systems for displaying by browsers of the supplier computer systems;

sending an HTML formatted document including programming instructions, the instructions being second instructions operable with the processor for sending to supplier computer systems, the second instructions being for execution as an applets by the browsers of the second computer system, wherein the survey questions are rendered in the browser by the browser executing the applet, such that for the rendering of the survey questions the applet parses the questions and the answers into data arrays stored in memory of the second computer system, and wherein the browser executing the applet causes causing the second supplier computer systems to return supplier survey answers to the first computer system responsive to the applets processing user inputs and the survey questions, wherein the answers are defined in a certain format as XML formatted data elements included in the answer response responding documents;

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third instructions operable with the processor for parsing the answer data elements from the answer response responding documents by the first computer system;

receiving, by the first computer system, rules input by the evaluator organization, wherein the rules define how supplier answers are combined with evaluator preferences or requirements and include weights for respective answers; and

fourth instructions operable with the processor for evaluating the data elements by an evaluator process of the second computer system, wherein the evaluating comprises:

comparing the data elements to corresponding ones of the evaluator requirements, wherein the comparing produces quantitative correlations between respective answer data elements and respective evaluator requirements or preference; and

combining the correlations responsive to the weights and the received rules, wherein one of the correlations is defined as (10 - (absolute value (one of the answer data elements - the answer data element's respective evaluator requirement or preference data element)) / 10.

16. (canceled)

17. (original) The system of claim 15, wherein the questions and their corresponding answers are organized in categories according to subject matter.

18. (original) The system of claim 17, wherein the categories include development process, quality, enterprise, platform, operating system and environment.

19. (canceled)

20. (canceled)

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21. (currently amended) The system of claim 15 20, wherein the storage device is for storing:

instructions operable with the processor for sending ~~survey questions for receipt by the evaluator's computer system;~~

~~evaluator survey sending instructions operable with the processor for sending programming instructions for receipt and execution by the evaluator's computer systems of the evaluators, wherein the evaluator survey sending instructions being for causing the evaluator's computer systems to return evaluator survey inputs to the server, wherein the evaluator survey inputs are included in one or more evaluator responding documents and are defined in a certain format as data elements included in the one or more evaluator responding documents.~~

22. (canceled)

23. (canceled)

24. (canceled)